

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 18-23, 28-30, and 35-37 are pending. Claims 8-17, 24-27, 31-34, and 38-41 have been withdrawn and claims 1, 5, 18, 21, 28, and 35 have been amended. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the original claims and other claims in this and in other applications.

Claims 1-7, 18-23, 28-30, and 35-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Gillingham et al (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 20020015348) (“Gillingham”). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 1 recites, inter alia, a content addressable memory (CAM) cell, comprising “a matchline; a wordline; and a shieldline positioned between said matchline and said wordline for shielding electrical noise from said matchline, said shieldline being electrically separate from said matchline while shielding said wordline.” (emphasis added)

Gillingham discloses a “system and method for reduction of power consumed by a searchline buffer and control circuit during a CAM search-and-compare operation.” (Gillingham, Abstract)

Gillingham fails to disclose or suggest “a shieldline positioned between said matchline and said wordline for shielding electrical noise from said matchline, said shieldline being electrically separate from said matchline while shielding said wordline.” To the contrary, Gillingham’s “shieldline”, TL, is connected to Gillingham’s matchline, rather than being “positioned between said matchline and said wordline” and “being electrically separate from said matchline” as in the claimed invention. (Gillingham, ¶ [0040]). This is confirmed by the Examiner’s comment “(ML and TL are coupled together, so TL receives electrical noise from the matchline).”

Further, Gillingham’s “shieldline”, TL, is connected to Gillingham’s matchline and, depending on the state of the n-channel transistor shares the signal carried on the matchline. The Examiner suggests “the shieldline TL is separate from the matchline ML

by the electrical components 102 and 104; in other words, the electrical components 102 and 104 are using to disconnect/separate or connect the shield line TL from the matchline ML.” Gillingham’s components 102 and 104 are transistors and the matchline of Gillingham is coupled to the alleged ‘shieldline’ of Gillingham through the transistors 102 and 104. Gillingham does not teach or suggest his “shieldline” “shielding electrical noise from said matchline” when the “shieldline” is “electrically separate form said matchline.” Thus the matchline of Gillingham is not “electrically separate” from the alleged “shieldline” of Gillingham. To the contrary, as the Examiner points out, “every matchline MLi and tail line TLi are coupled together.” (Gillingham, Para. [0040], ll. 10-12). As such, the “shieldline” of Gillingham is different from the “shieldline” of the claimed invention. Therefore, the rejection to claim 1 should be withdrawn.

Claims 2-4 depend from claim 1 and incorporate, directly and indirectly, all the limitations thereof and are allowable for at least the reason noted above.

Claims 5-7, 18-23, 28-30, and 35-37 are similar to claim 1 and are allowable for at least the reason noted above.

Claims 4 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious under Gillingham. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claims 4 and 20 are similar to claim 1 and are allowable for at least the reason noted above.

The Applicant appreciates the Examiner’s time and attention during the telephone conference of April 27, 2005, with Applicant’s representative. During this conference, the claims and the prior art were discussed, but no agreement was reached regarding the claimed invention.

In view of the above comments, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

Thomas J. D'Amico

Registration No.: 28,371

Michael A. Weinstein

Registration No.: 53,754

DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN &

OSHINSKY LLP

2101 L Street NW

Washington, DC 20037-1526

(202) 785-9700

Attorneys for Applicant